DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 244 EA 011 157

AUTHOR Robinson, Norman
TITLE The Tasks of Secondary Education: Conflicting Expectations of Parents, Educators and Students.
PUB DATE Feb 73
NOTE 40p.; Figure 3 may be marginally legible

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Surveys; *Educational Objectives; Individual Development; Parent Attitudes; Questionnaires; Secondary Education; Statistical Data; Student Attitudes; Student Opinion; Tables (Data); Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *British Columbia (West Vancouver); *Task of Public Educ Opinionnaire (Downey et al)

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to define the principle tasks of secondary education as perceived by parents, educators, and students in one Canadian suburban school district in 1971. In addition, it compares their opinions with those of similar groups in the United States and Canada surveyed a decade earlier. The Task of Public Education (TPE) Opinionnaire was used to measure responses to 16 goals that are broken down into four principal dimensions of individual development: intellectual, social, productive, and personal. Three figures present samples of the questionnaire and six tables analyze the results. Parents, educators, and students all agreed on the primacy of the intellectual dimension in secondary education, findings which are similar to those of the Downey and Hartrick studies done a decade earlier. However, the 1971 West Vancouver results show much greater concern for international harmony and for developing a desire for knowledge than the 1960 and 1961 Downey and Hartrick studies, which emphasize national patriotism and the efficient use of the 3 Rs. The stated value of the study is in the information it provides educational policy-makers in this district. (Author/LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED165244

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

THE TASKS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: CONFLICTING EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

NORMAN ROBINSON

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. Robinson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia

February, 1973

EA 011 157

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Purposes

In North American social discourse controversy over the tasks of public education is a recurring theme. At no time has there existed a consensus among the public on the essential tasks of public education. In today's society, however, it would appear there is less consensus than ever before. Research evidence suggests that the public is divided in its opinion on the extent to which schools should emphasize the various educational tasks designed to elicit the attainment of intellectual, social, productive and personal goals.[1]

The lack of consensus on "what schools should do" that prevails among the general public manifests itself as well among the professional educators who work in the schools and among the students who are served by the schools. Educators cannot agree on the essential tasks of public education. Similarly, students are not sure what schools should be doing to meet their needs.

This study attempted to investigate the extent to which a sample drawn from three groups intimately concerned with education agreed on the essential tasks of secondary schools. The three groups sampled were parents, educators and students in a suburban school district in metropolitan Vancouver, Canada. The study was conducted in late 1971.

The study attempted as well to compare the opinions of this sample of parents, educators and students on the tasks of secondary education with the opinions of similar groups in the United States and Canada a decade earlier. The purpose of this phase of the study was to diagnose any shifting in parental, educator, or student opinion on the tasks of secondary education over the past ten years.

---

1. Gallup, George H., "Fourth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education", Phi Delta Kappan, LIV (September, 1972), pp. 33-46.

In summary, this study attempted to provide some insight into two questions of central importance to educational policymakers, be they legislators, school trustees or educators:

1. What are the principal tasks of secondary education as perceived by parents, educators, and students, in one Canadian suburban school district in 1971?

2. How do the opinions of this sample of Canadian parents, educators and students on the tasks of secondary education compare with the opinions of similar groups in United States and Canada surveyed a decade earlier?

The Sample

The school district in which this study was conducted is School District #45 (West Vancouver). This district is an upper middle class constituency. 82.5% of the parents participating in the study reported incomes of over $12,000, with 60.5% reporting incomes of over $15,000. In terms of educational attainment levels, 79.5% of the parental participants had some amount of post-secondary education.

West Vancouver School District has three large secondary schools with each school enrolling over 800 students. From school lists, a random sample of 150 parents in each secondary school attendance area was drawn.

One of the secondary schools in the district chose not to have its educators and students participate in the study. In the remaining two schools, permission was received from each school's administration to allow all teachers and students to participate voluntarily in the study.

The Opinionnaire

The instrument used to measure opinion in this study was the Tasks of Public Education (TPE) Opinionnaire constructed by Downey, Seager and Slagle.[2] Since this study was concerned solely with secondary education, only that part of the TPE concerned with secondary educational tasks was employed.

The TPE provides each respondent to the opinionnaire with a list of sixteen items descriptive of sixteen tasks of the secondary school. The sixteen tasks can be further grouped into four principal dimensions of individual development. The dimensions, tasks and items of the TPE are shown in Figure 1.

The four tasks and their items under the Intellectual Dimension all relate to four general intellectual processes: acquiring knowledge, communicating knowledge, creating knowledge, and desiring knowledge.

The Social Dimension is concerned with those tasks of secondary education concerned with the development of the individual and his relationship to the many social groupings in which he lives --- man to fellow man, man to state, man to country and man to world.

The Personal Dimension deals with those tasks of secondary education concerned with the individual's own personal development, exclusive of intellectual development.

The Productive Dimension refers generally to tasks of secondary education designed to prepare the individual for a productive, responsible adult role. This dimension includes tasks related to vocation selection, vocation preparation, family life and responsible consumerism.

---

2. Downey, L., The Tasks of Public Education, (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, The University of Chicago, 1960).

FIGURE 1

SECONDARY EDUCATION: DIMENSIONS, TASKS AND ITEMS (TPE OPINIONNAIRE)

Dimension	Task	Item
INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION	1. Possession of Knowledge	1. A fund of information about many things
	2. Communication of Knowledge	2. Efficient use of the 3 R's the basic tools for acquiring and communicating knowledge
	3. Creation of Knowledge	3. The habit of weighing facts and imaginatively applying them to the solution of problems
	4. Desire for Knowledge	4. A continuing desire for knowledge - the inquiring mind
SOCIAL DIMENSION	5. Man to Fellow Man	5. A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony
	6. Man to State	6. An understanding of government and a sense of civic responsibility
	7. Man to Country	7. Loyalty to Canada and the Canadian way of life
	8. Man to World	8. Knowledge of world affairs and the inter-relationship among peoples

FIGURE 1 (Cont'd)

SECONDARY EDUCATION: DIMENSIONS, TASKS AND ITEMS (TPE OPINIONNAIRE)

Dimension	Task	Item
PERSONAL DIMENSION	9. Physical	9. A well-cared for, well-developed body
	10. Emotional	10. An emotionally stable person-prepared for life's realities
	11. Ethical	11. A sense of right and wrong - a moral standard of behavior
	12. Aesthetic	12. Enjoyment of cultural activities - the finer things of life
PRODUCTIVE DIMENSION	13. Vocation - Selective	13. Information and guidance for wise occupational choice
	14. Vocation - Preparative	14. Specialized training for placement in a specific job
	15. Home and Family	15. The homemaking and handyman skills related to family life
	16. Consumer	16. Management of personal finances and wise buying habits

The above dimensions, tasks and items were developed from an extensive investigation of the literature on educational goals and objectives. A lengthy list of tasks was first prepared and then this list was reduced to the sixteen most frequently mentioned tasks.

In completing the TPE, each respondent is asked to rank order the sixteen items descriptive of each task in terms of:

The ONE most important task
The next TWO most important tasks
The next THREE most important tasks
The next FOUR most important tasks
The next THREE most important tasks
The next TWO most important tasks
The ONE least important task

The ranking system employed for the TPE has both advantages and disadvantages. The principal advantage is that it gives a clear indication of the order of importance that is assigned to each task by a respondent. The principal disadvantage is that, although order of importance is shown, the ranking does not indicate at what point the importance is so low that the task should not be the concern of the school. For example, although a respondent has ranked all sixteen tasks; he may, in reality, feel that the school should be concerned only with his top three rankings.

One final disadvantage of the TPE should be noted. Since the TPE offers the respondent only sixteen tasks of secondary education to choose from in his ranking; it is entirely possible that he or she may feel that there is a task of secondary education that is of paramount importance that is not included in the sixteen choices. In this situation, the forced - choice nature of the TPE could result in a distortion of the individual respondent's opinions. Past research on the TPE has shown, however, that the opinionnaire has been remarkably successful in accommodating the many frames of individual reference

that are to be found in any large public sampling. In short, only a small percentage of respondents to the TPE has indicated difficulty in expressing its views through the opinionnaire.

Data Collection

The TPE opinionnaires were distributed to the study participants in two different fashions. In the two secondary schools where the educators and students had agreed to participate in the study, the opinionnaires were delivered to the school, distributed, and later collected. Anonymity of response was assured through the provision of envelopes in which respondents could seal their completed opinionnaires. In addition, the opinionnaires had no identifying marks of any kind.

Opinionnaires for parents were mailed to their homes. Each parent in the sample received a letter of explanation, an opinionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the opinionnaire.

In addition to the TPE Opinionnaire, all respondents were asked to provide certain information relating to personal characteristics

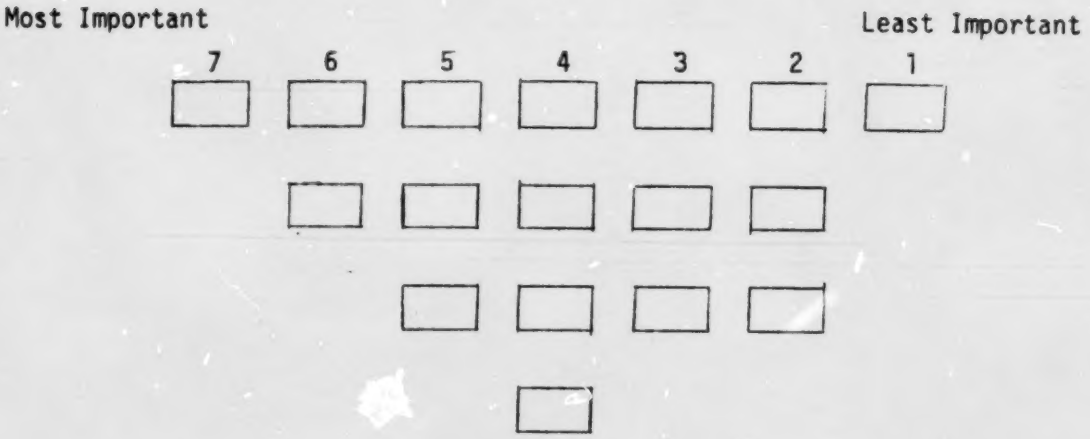
Usable returns were received from 1,243 students (69.1%) and 53 teachers (61.2%). Usable returns from parents totalled 168 (32.9%).

Data Treatment

As explained earlier, each respondent to the TPE Opinionnaire had to rank order the TPE items in terms of the one most important, the next two most important, the next three most important, the next four most important, the next three most important, the next two most important and finally, the one least important. In effect, each respondent was actually sorting the items into seven categories from the one most important to the one least important. The seven categories into which the sixteen items were ordered are shown in Figure 2 on the following page.

FIGURE 2

ORDERING CATEGORIES FOR THE TPE ITEMS



When a respondent placed an item in the one most important category, that item was assigned a numerical value of seven; the next two items he chose as most important were each assigned a numerical value of six; and so on down to the one least important item which was assigned a numerical value of one.

By assigning numerical values to all respondents' rankings of the TPE items, it was possible to composite the rankings and to make comparisions between different groups of respondents on individual items of the TPE. In short, it became possible to examine the opinions of parents, educators and students on the TPE in terms of: (1) each group's overall ranking of the TPE items from one to sixteen; (2) the actual numerical weighting that each group assigned to each of the sixteen items expressed in terms of the mean of each group for each item.

In the analysis of the TPE data, comparisons were thus made between parents, educators and students on: (1) their overall rankings of the TPE items; and (2) their means on each of the sixteen TPE items.

In the comparison of the results of this study with those of studies done a decade earlier, only comparisons of rankings were made.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to attempt to answer the following two questions: (1) To what extent do parents, educators and students in one suburban metropolitan Vancouver school district agree on the tasks of secondary education as outlined in the TPE Opinionnaire, and (2) To what extent do the opinions of the parents, educators and students involved in this study agree with the opinions held by similiar groups a decade earlier?

Extent to which Parents, Educators and Students Agree on the Tasks of Secondary Education

Table 1 provides a summary of the means and ranks assigned to the TPE items by each of the three groups (parents, educators, students) involved in this study.

Overall ranking of the TPE items: A comparison of the rankings of the TPE items by parents, educators and students reveals high agreement between these three groups on how they rank the items in order of importance. The rank order correlation coefficient (rho) for the items between parents and educators is .98 ($p < .001$). Between parents and students the coefficient is .85 ($p < .001$); and between educators and students the coefficient is .90 ($p < .001$).

As indicated earlier, the TPE Opinionnaire has four dimensions: Intellectual, Social, Personal and Productive. Parents as a group judged the Intellectual Dimension to be the most important in terms of the tasks of secondary education. The Productive Dimension was judged to be the least important. The opinions of educators coincided with those of parents. Like parents, they assigned three of the four highest rankings to items in the Intellectual Dimension and three of the four lowest rankings to items in the Productive Dimension.

The rankings of students differed somewhat from those of parents and educators. Students gave two of the four highest rankings

Table 1

TASKS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: MEANS AND RANKS FOR WEST VANCOUVER PARENTS EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

(Parents = 168; Educators = 51; Students = 1,243)

DIMENSION	TASK	PARENTS		EDUCATORS		STUDENTS	
		$\bar{X}$	Rank	$\bar{X}$	Rank	$\bar{X}$	Rank
Intellectual	1. Possession of Knowledge	3.98	9	3.92	9	4.32	7
	2. Communication of Knowledge	5.57	3	5.19	4	4.33	6
	3. Creation of Knowledge	5.62	2	5.58	2	4.57	4
	4. Desire for Knowledge	5.93	1	5.76	1	4.98	2
Social	5. Man to Fellow Man	5.07	4	5.56	3	5.01	1
	6. Man to State	3.86	10	3.77	10	3.62	11
	7. Man to Country	2.83	13	2.53	15	3.08	16
	8. Man to World	4.13	7	3.98	7	4.51	5
Personal	9. Physical	3.17	12	3.45	12	3.24	14
	10. Emotional	4.70	5	4.96	5	4.63	3
	11. Ethical	4.16	6	4.25	6	4.14	8
	12. Esthetic	3.22	11	3.55	11	3.29	13
Productive	13. Vocation-Selective	4.08	8	3.98	8	4.11	9
	14. Vocation-Preparative	2.59	15	2.78	13	4.02	10
	15. Home and Family	2.60	14	2.62	14	3.13	15
	16. Consumer	2.58	16	2.52	16	3.38	12

to items in the Intellectual Dimension; but only one of the four lowest rankings to items in the Productive Dimension. As a group, students thus tended to assign somehwat more importance to the Productive Dimension and somewhat less importance to the Intellectual Dimension than did parents and educators.

Differences of opinion between parents, educators and students on individual TPE items. In addition to the rankings of the TPE items, Table 1 shows the means of the sixteen items for each of the three groups. For example, Table 1 shows, that on item 1, the means for parents, educators and students are 3.98, 3.92 and 4.32 respectively. These means express in a precise manner the amount of importance of this item to each group on a scale ranging from 7 (most important) to 1 (least important).

Analyses were performed to determine whether parents, educators and students differed significantly in their opinions on each of the sixteen TPE items. First of all, a one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine whether there existed a significant overall difference of opinion between parents, educators and students on each of the sixteen items. This analysis of variance revealed that parents, educators and students did not differ significantly in their opinions on items 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. This means simply that all three groups did not differ significantly in terms of the amount of importance they assigned to each of these items on a scale ranging from 7 (most important) to 1 (least important).

The one-way analysis of variance did reveal, however, that statistically significant differences of opinion did exist between parents, educators and students on items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 16. The differences of opinion on these items were significant overall

differences. A further test (Scheffe Multiple Comparison of Means Test)[3] was performed to determine the statistical significance of each paired comparison on each item, i.e. parent-educator, parent-student, educator-student. These paired comparisons were designed to reveal differences of opinion between groups, compared two at a time.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 document the results of the paired comparisons. Table 2 reveals that there were no statistically significant differences of opinion between parents and educators on any of the sixteen TPE items.

Table 3 shows the significant differences of opinion between parents and students. An inspection of this table reveals that parents attach significantly more importance to the Intellectual Dimension of secondary education than do students. On the other hand, students place significantly more importance on the Productive Dimension of secondary education than do parents.

Table 4 documents the significant differences of opinion between educators and students. Similarly to parents, educators attach more importance to items descriptive of the Intellectual Dimension of secondary education than do students. Students, on the other hand, place more importance on the Productive Dimension of secondary education than do educators. Finally, students place more importance on two specific items (items 7, 8) in the Social Dimension than do teachers; while teachers place more importance on one other specific item (item 5) in the Social Dimension than do students.

A final comment should be made on the overall importance each group assigns to the four dimensions of secondary education measured by the TPE Opinionnaire. Figure 3 shows in graphic form the means for parents, educators and students on all sixteen TPE items.

---

3. Winer, B.J., Statistical Principles in Experimental Design, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), pp. 88-89.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION
BETWEEN PARENTS AND EDUCATORS ON THE TASKS
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION ITEMS

More Important for Parents than Educators	More Important for Educators than Parents
NONE	NONE

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION
BETWEEN PARENTS AND STUDENTS ON THE TASKS
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION ITEMS

More Important for Parents than Students	More Important for Students than Parents
Efficient use of the 3 R's (Intellectual)***	Knowledge of world affairs and the interrelationships among people (Social)**
The habit of weighing facts and imaginatively applying them to the solution of problems (Intellectual)***	Specialized training for placement in a specific job (Productive)***
A continuing desire for knowledge - the inquiring mind (Intellectual)***	The homemaking and handyman skills related to family life (Productive)***
	Management of personal finances and wise buying habits (Productive)***

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS ON THE TASKS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION ITEMS

More Important for Educators than Students	More Important for Students than Educators
Efficient use of the 3 R's (Intellectual)***	Loyalty to Canada and the Canadian way of life (Social)*
The habit of weighing facts and imaginatively applying them to the solution of problems (Intellectual)***	Knowledge of world affairs and the interrelationships among peoples (Social)**
A continuing desire for knowledge - the inquiring mind (Intellectual)***	Specialized training for placement in a specific job (Productive)***
A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony (Social)*	The homemaking and handyman skills related to family life (Productive)*
	Management of personal finances and wise buying habits (Productive)***

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

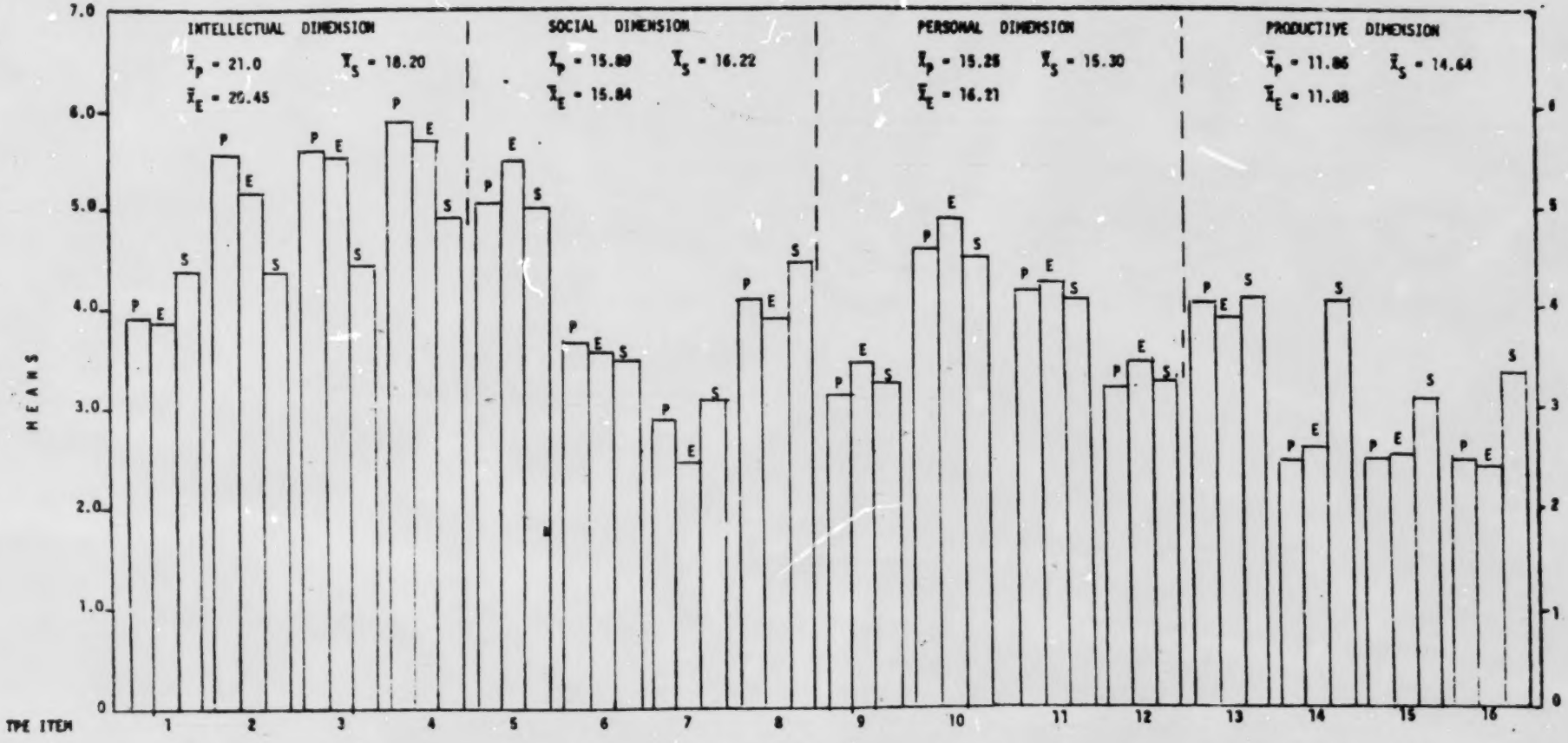


FIGURE 9

HISTOGRAM SHOWING MEANS OF PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS ON TPE OPINIONNAIRE ITEMS

In addition, the means of each group on the four dimensions of secondary education are also shown. An inspection of the histogram in Figure 3 shows that parents favor a heavy emphasis on the Intellectual Dimension of secondary education. So do educators. Students, although assigning first order importance to the Intellectual Dimension, do not assign the same degree of emphasis to this dimension as do parents and educators. All three groups assign relatively the same degree of importance to the Social and Personal Dimensions, although students do assign moderately more importance to the Social Dimension than do parents and educators. In a like fashion, educators assign moderately more importance to the Personal Dimension than do parents and students.

The most striking differences exist in the evaluation of the importance of the Productive Dimension. Although all three groups agree that this dimension is the least important of the four dimensions of secondary education; students assign it distinctly more importance than do educators and parents.

Comparison of West Vancouver Results With Earlier TPE Studies

In 1960, Downey and his associates[4] constructed the TPE Opinionnaire and surveyed the opinions of a sample of educators and non-educators drawn from four geographical regions in the United States and one in Canada.[5] In 1961, Hartrick[6] did a similar study in the American Midwest, adding a sample of secondary school students.

---

4. Downey, op. cit.
5. The Canadian region was the province of Alberta.
6. Hartrick, W.J., "Perception of the Public High School Task and Program," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1961).

Table 5 compares the rankings of the sixteen TPE items obtained by Downey and Hartrick with the rankings obtained in this study. Table 6 gives the rank order interrcorrelations of the TPE items for all groups in the West Vancouver, Dowrey and Hartrick studies.

An inspection of these tables reveals a high degree of similarity in the rankings between all groups. All the interrcorrelations are significant at the .05 level or higher.[7] Attention should be drawn, however, to certain differences in ranks assigned to individual items by similar groups surveyed a decade apart. In all cases, only gross differences in ranks are noted. An arbitrary figure of a full quarter change in rank (e.g. from 6th to 10th) has been chosen as an indicator of a gross change.

In comparing West Vancouver parents in 1971 with Downey's non-educators (which included non-parents as well as parents) in 1960, we find these gross differences of opinion:

(a) West Vancouver parents rank the following items more important than do Downey's non-educators:

- A fund of information about many things
- A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony
- Enjoyment of cultural activities - the finer things of life

---

7. The correlation of Hartrick's students with other groups would probably be higher except for the fact that item 1 on the Hartrick version of the TPE is worded differently than on the TPE Opinionnaire used in the Downey and West Vancouver studies. Rather than asking the respondent to react to the item "A fund of information about many things", it asks the respondent to react to the item "A fund of concepts." Item 1 in the Hartrick study is thus quite different and no comparisons on item 1 should be made between the Hartrick, Downey and West Vancouver studies on this item.

TABLE 5

RANK ORDER INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN WEST VANCOUVER DOWNEY AND HARTRICK GROUPS ON TPE ITEMS

Group	West Vancouver Parents	West Vancouver Educators	West Vancouver Students	Downey Non-Educators	Downey Educators	Hartrick Students
West Vancouver Parents	1.00					
West Vancouver Educators	.98***	1.00				
West Vancouver Students	.85***	.90***	1.00			
Downey Non-Educators	.81***	.78***	.62**	1.00		
Downey Educators	.89***	.87***	.74**	.91***	1.00	
Hartrick Students	.71**	.64**	.51*	.67**	.64**	1.00

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

TABLE 6

TASKS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: RANKS FOR GROUPS
IN WEST VANCOUVER, DOWNEY AND HARTRICK STUDIES

Dimension	Task	West Vancouver			Downey		Hartrick
		Parents (N=168)	Educators (N=51)	Students (N=1243)	Non-Educators (N=2544)	Educators (N=1286)	Students (N=205)
Intellectual	1. Possession of Knowledge	9	9	7	13	14	3
	2. Communication of Knowledge	3	4	6	1	1	1
	3. Creation of Knowledge	2	2	4	3	3	6
	4. Desire for Knowledge	1	1	2	2	2	2
Social	5. Man to Fellow Man	4	3	1	8	4	8
	6. Man to State	10	10	11	7	6	5
	7. Man to Country	13	15	16	9	10	7
	8. Man to World	7	7	5	10	9	4
Personal	9. Physical	12	12	14	12	12	10
	10. Emotional	5	5	3	8	5	11
	11. Ethical	6	6	8	5	7	9
	12. Esthetic	11	11	13	15	11	13

TABLE 6 (Cont'd)

Dimension	Task	West Vancouver			Downey		Hartrick
		Parents (N=168)	Educators (N=51)	Students (N=1243)	Non-Educators (N=2544)	Educators (N=1286)	Students (N=205)
Productive	13. Vocation-Selective	8	8	9	6	8	12
	14. Vocation-Preparative	15	13	10	11	13	14
	15. Home and Family	14	14	15	16	16	15
	16. Consumer	16	16	12	14	15	16

(b) West Vancouver parents rank the following items less important than do Downey's non-educators:

- Loyalty to Canada (America) and the Canadian (American) way of life
- Specialized training for placement in a specific job

In comparing West Vancouver educators in 1971 with Downey's educators in 1960, we find these differences of opinion:

(a) West Vancouver educators rank the following item more important than do Downey's educators:

- A fund of information about many things

(b) West Vancouver educators rank the following items less important than do Downey's educators:

- An understanding of government and a sense of civic responsibility
- Loyalty to Canada (America) and the Canadian (American) way of life

In comparing West Vancouver students in 1971 with Hartrick's students in 1961, we find these differences of opinion:

(a) West Vancouver students rank the following items more important than do Hartrick's students:

- A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony
- An emotionally stable person prepared for life's realities
- Specialized training for placement in a specific job
- Management of personal finances and wise buying habits

(b) West Vancouver students rank the following items less important than do Hartrick's students:

- Efficient use of the 3 R's
- An understanding of government and a sense of civic responsibility
- Loyalty to Canada (America) and the Canadian (American) way of life

- A well-cared for, well-developed body

Summary of Findings

In summary, the findings of this study disclosed the following:

1. There was a high degree of agreement among West Vancouver parents, educators and students in their overall rankings of the TPE items.

2. There were significant differences of opinion between West Vancouver parents and students on the amount of importance assigned to individual TPE items. Parents, as a group, assigned more importance to items in the Intellectual Dimension of secondary education than did students. Students, as a group, assigned more importance to items in the Productive Dimension than did parents.

3. There were significant differences of opinion between West Vancouver educators and students on the amount of importance assigned to individual TPE items. Educators assigned more importance to items in the Intellectual Dimension of secondary education than did students. Students assigned more importance to items in the Productive Dimension than did educators.

4. There were no significant differences of opinion between West Vancouver parents and educators on the amount of importance assigned to individual TPE items.

5. The four dimensions of secondary education were given similar overall rankings by West Vancouver parents, educators and students. The Intellectual Dimension was given the highest ranking and the Productive Dimension the lowest ranking. The Personal and Social Dimensions were given a more or less equal middle ranking.

6. The overall rankings assigned to the TPE items by West Vancouver parents, educators and students in 1971 correlated significantly with rankings given to these same items by Downey's educators and non-educators in 1960, and by Hartrick's students in 1961. There were, however, some gross differences in ranks between groups on individual items.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the single greatest need in public education today is an answer to the question "What are schools for?" It is quite clear that a statement of an institution's tasks plays an important role in guiding the institution and its constituent parts to an effective realization of its goals. When an institution's tasks are known and stated, the tasks suggest appropriate organizational structures, appropriate strategies and practices, and probable products or outcomes. Without task specification, institutional behavior lacks goal orientation and purposiveness.

The public school is an institution that has been created by society to achieve certain goals. In defining in clear terms what these goals are, however, society has often been inarticulate, vague, and changeable. For this reason the public schools have usually suffered from a low degree of goal focus and a high degree of goal ambiguity. And yet, if one examines goal statements for education over the past century, one is struck by the common threads of goal orientation that run through these statements. Although alterations do take place, and emphases do shift in response to changing times and circumstances; certain broad general goals for the public schools have tended to endure.

Over a century ago Horace Mann said that education had three main kinds of goals: intellectual, moral and physical.[8] In 1918 the National Education Association published its Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.[9] These principles specified that the secondary school should be concerned with good health, command of fundamental processes, vocational efficiency, civic efficiency, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character.

---

8. Ebel, Robert "What Are Schools For?" Phi Delta Kappan, LIV (September, 1972), p. 4.
9. Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education, Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918).

Again in 1938, the National Education Association proposed the following purposes of education:

1. Self realization: the inquiring mind, command of fundamental processes, health knowledge, intellectual and aesthetic interests.
2. Human relationships: respect for humanity.
3. Economic efficiency: good workmanship, occupational information, personal economics, consumer judgements.
4. Civic responsibility: social activity, social understanding, tolerance, political citizenship.[10]

In 1954, Warner Havighurst and Loeb proposed the following as essential functions of public schools:

1. To provide a basis of communication and a common core of traditions and values.
2. To teach children to work and live together.
3. To help people find ways of realizing their social ideals.
4. To teach the skills for carrying on the economic life of society.
5. To select and train children for social mobility.[11]

In 1956, the White House Conference on Education produced the following list of tasks with which the public schools should be concerned:

1. The fundamental skills of communication.
2. Civic rights and responsibilities.
3. Respect and appreciation for human values and the beliefs of others.
4. Ability to think and evaluate constructively and creatively.

---

10. Committee on Social Economic Goals, Implications of Social Economic Goals for Education, (Washington: National Education Association, 1938).

11. Warner, W. Lloyd, Havighurst, R.J. and Loeb, M.E., Who Shall Be Educated? (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954).

5. Social competency as a contributing member of the family and the community.
6. Ethical behavior based on a sense of moral and spiritual values.
7. Intellectual curiosity and eagerness for life-long learning.
8. Aesthetic appreciation.
9. Physical and mental health.
10. Wise use of leisure time.
11. Understanding of the physical world.
12. An awareness of our relationships with the world community.[12]

In 1972, the Worth Commission in Alberta listed the following general goals of education:

1. Personal autonomy: to nuture growth toward selfhood and individual freedom.
2. Social competence: to nuture the capacity for satisfying relations with others.
3. Ethical discretion: to nuture the development of personal values and social values.
4. Creative capacity: to nuture the growth of broad leisure and recreational interests and skills.
5. Career proficiency: to nurture the development and maintenance of occupational competence.
6. Intellectual power: to nurture the use and extension of intellectual and aesthetic abilities.[13]

Lists of educational goals for public schools could be cited endlessly. The important point is that a survey of goal statements over the period of a century or more reveals a remarkable consistency in these statements. General goals for education have endured and these goals can be grouped into four broad categories.

---

12. The Committee for the White House Conference on Education, A Report to the President, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956).

13. Commission on Educational Planning, A Choice of Futures, (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1972), pp. 46-48.

Intellectual goals. These are goals relating to the acquiring, communicating, creating, and seeking of knowledge.

Social goals. These are goals associated with the ethical and intelligent performance of the individual's social responsibilities - man to fellow man, man to state, man to country, and man to world.

Personal goals. These are goals that are valuable to the individual in his efforts at self-actualization in non-intellectual spheres. This category would include those goals relating to the cultivation of aesthetic interests, physical well-being, emotional stability, and various forms of self-expression.

Practical goals. These are goals dealing primarily with efficient living, especially as it relates to preparation for work, family life, and intelligent consumer behavior.

Four broad, enduring categories of goals for education can thus be identified. At any one point in time, however, these goal categories are differentially valued by the public. Opinion on the relative importance of each of these four categories shifts and changes. Educational policymakers need to know what the prevailing state of goal valuation is. Policymakers need to know, for example, if intellectual goals are as valued today as they were in the immediate post-Sputnik era. If educational policymakers are to keep abreast of shifting public opinion, they need to conduct periodic examinations of the views of the public for their opinions on what the tasks of the schools should be. In addition, educational policymakers need to know how educators and students perceive the school's tasks in relation to the public's perceptions. Only in this way can the degree of congruency of task expectations among these groups be ascertained.

In this study an attempt was made to examine the opinions of parents, educators and students in one particular school district at one particular point in time. The generalizability of the findings of this study to other school districts at different points in time is possibly quite limited. As will be noted later in this report, however, similar studies done at this same point in time (the early 1970's) have tended to produce similar results.

The TPE Opinionnaire was chosen as the instrument most suitable for a large scale sampling of parent, educator and student opinion on the tasks of secondary education in the school district under study. The findings obtained provide data to educational policymakers in West Vancouver School District that should enable them to understand more clearly the perceptions of parents, educators and students on the tasks of secondary education. This data should also facilitate group study and discussion of "what the secondary schools are for," and, hopefully, aid future planning, curriculum development and evaluation.

The findings of this study reveal that parents, educators and students all agree on the primacy of the Intellectual Dimension in secondary education. Parents and educators are of one mind in assigning three of the highest rankings to items in the Intellectual Dimension. Students were only slightly less emphatic in their assertion of the importance of the Intellectual Dimension by assigning to it two of the highest rankings to items in this dimension.

These findings relating to the primacy of the Intellectual Dimension are similar to those of the Downey and Hartrick studies done a decade earlier. It should be noted, however, that the parents, educators and students in West Vancouver, in contrast to similar groups in the Downey and Hartrick studies, assign much less importance to the efficient use of the 3 R's (item 2) and much more importance to developing a desire for knowledge (item 4). The West Vancouver results would seem to reflect the views of many contemporary educators[14] that the development of intellectual competence is dependent on the development of curiosity and concern, supported by the skills of inquiry. Efficient use of the 3 R's is important; but only in so far as it enables the inquiring mind to engage in intellectual activities such as observing, classifying, predicting, inferring, hypothesizing, and interpreting.

---

14. Raths, Louis E. et al. Teaching for Thinking (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1967).

Within the past ten years changes have appeared to occur in the way parents, educators and students view the Social Dimension of secondary education. Essentially, the 1971 West Vancouver results show much greater concern for international harmony, and much less concern for national patriotism than do the 1960 and 1961 results of Downey and Hartrick. The growth in the importance of education for international understanding is evident among all groups, but most particularly among students and educators. Events of the past decade have seemed to heighten the realization that schools must produce students that are informed about, and sensitive to the problems and needs of other peoples. Self-preservation, if not human decency, calls for persons with qualities conducive to improved international understanding. The fact that students in the West Vancouver study gave their highest ranking to the item "A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony" would seem to indicate that they agree with Arthur Combs when he says that "We can live with a bad reader; a bigot is a danger to everyone."

Another pronounced difference between the 1971 West Vancouver results and the Downey and Hartrick results of the early 1960's relates to the increased importance the West Vancouver sample assigned to the school's role in the development of emotional stability in students. There appears to be a growing recognition that living in a society with shifting values, norms and life styles places considerable strain on individuals. Unless schools are to produce individuals who are emotionally stable and prepared for life's realities; society will be burdened with an increasingly demoralized and emotionally unstable populace. To offset tendencies in the individual toward personal disintegration and social disorientation, schools must provide experiences that foster the development of positive self-concepts and feelings of group membership. Only in this way can the individual live with himself --- and with others.

---

15. Combs, Arthur W., Educational Accountability: Beyond Behavioral Objectives, (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1972), p. 23.

The Productive Dimension of secondary education was judged to be the least important dimension by all groups of respondents in the West Vancouver, Downey and Hartrick studies. It should be noted, however, that students in the West Vancouver study assigned significantly more importance to certain items in this dimension than did West Vancouver parents and educators. Specifically, a higher valuation was placed on those school experiences that were vocation-preparative and family life-preparative. In addition, the West Vancouver students assigned more importance to the Productive Dimension than did their student counterparts a decade earlier. The generalizability of these West Vancouver findings to other students can only be determined through further research. A study done by Ryan[16] in Ontario, however, revealed some similar results. Ryan's study was concerned with parental and student expectations for secondary school education and was conducted in a metropolitan Toronto school district with varied socio-economic characteristics. She found that 52% of students feel that the main focus of secondary school education should be on job training.

What is the explanation for student interest in the Productive Dimension of secondary education? Is it a demand for making schools training institutions for specific occupations? Is it a demand for courses in family education? Is it a demand for consumer education? Once again, these questions can only be answered in a definitive fashion through additional research.

One interesting speculation, however, is that student interest in the Productive Dimension of secondary education is the manifestation of a desire on the part of students to be involved in some aspects of the productive life of society at an earlier age.

---

16. Ryan, Doris et. al., Student and Parental Expectations for Secondary School Education, (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, n.d., mimeo), Table 1.

Worth[17] suggests that much of the current frustration among the young arises from their semi-isolated state in schools where they do not have contact with social reality. Schools are simply not "where it's at." In expanding on this theme, Coleman[18] has noted that schools as they now exist were designed for an information-poor society, in part to give a child vicarious experience through books and contact with a teacher. Society today is no longer information-poor, thanks to radio, television and other media. For children, as our society has become information-rich; it has become action-poor. Children no longer perform a productive role in the household or support themselves from an early age. The child's life has become impoverished in terms of responsible and productive social action. To remedy this action-poor state of children, Coleman suggests that schools must become action-rich through the provision of activities that are socially productive to the larger society. For example, schools could be integrated with service organizations, such as those providing medical services, so that the young could be integrated into functional community roles and not be isolated from them.

The integration of schools with community service organizations would, in all probability, be strongly supported by students. In another study[19] done by this author on parental, educator and student expectations for the role of the school in the community, the following question concerning drug abuse was asked:

Drug abuse is defined as non-medical use of drugs. What should the school's role be in dealing with drug abuse?

A. to ignore it
B. to give information about drugs and their use
C. to report the student to the parent

---

17. Commission on Educational Planning, op. cit., p. 38.

18. Coleman, James S., "The Children Have Outgrown the Schools," Psychology Today, 5 (February, 1972), pp. 72-75, 82.

19. Robinson, Norman, The Vernon Curriculum Inquiry, (A Special Report to the Board of School Trustees, School District #22 (Vernon, 1972), p. 58, 64.

D. to refer known drug abusers to social and medical (not police) agencies outside the school

E. to provide counselling and guidance services for drug abusers

A plurality of parents (46%) and the majority of teachers (55%) felt that the school's role should be essentially that of an information - giver (Choice B). Nearly half of all students (48%) felt, however, that the school should provide counselling and guidance services for drug abusers (Choice E). They were not in favor of referring drug abusers to outside social and medical agencies; nor were they strongly in favor of limiting the role of the school to that of an information-giver. What the students favored clearly was the involvement of the school in the community service area of drug abuse treatment.

Another way in which the school could enrich the action-poor lives of students is through the provision of experiences that would not only provide useful community services, but also prepare students for their future roles as parents. The recent President's Commission on School Finance[20] suggests that secondary schools should provide day care services. Not only would such services provide a valuable community service, but secondary school students would be educated as future parents.

The development of schools as places where socially productive community activities are carried out should be beneficial both to schools and to society at large. On this point, Worth notes:

> "Youth has been accorded a permanent place in the classroom, safe from responsibility, decision-making, and any sense of real work -- with no respectable appeal procedure. Youth has found recourse on its own terms: dropping out on the one hand, and power rebellions on the other. The message is clear: youth wants in, not out. Society must let youth in, just as schools must let society in." [21]

---

20. Piele, Phillip K., The President's Commission on School Finance (ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, R&D Perspectives, Spring, 1972).

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This study was a modest attempt to survey the opinions of parents, educators and students on the tasks of secondary education in one suburban school district in British Columbia. The value of the study resides primarily in the information it provides educational policymakers in this district. Hopefully, the results of the study will serve as a basis for group study and dialogue among the parents, students and educators in the West Vancouver School District. Finally, the results might provide some useful guidelines for educational planning in the district.

It should be stressed, however, that local district educational planning cannot and should not, be carried on outside the context of regional and provincial planning. In addition, educational planning cannot, and should not, be carried on outside the context of broader social and economic planning. There is a place for local school district educational planning but only as part of a larger contextual planning framework.

Educational planning has to be articulated with general social and economic planning. The interdependence of social, economic and educational services, the need for establishing priorities among these services, and the limits on the availability of human and material resources necessitates planning articulation. At the provincial level there is a need for a central planning body charged with the responsibility of overall planning as it relates to the goals and priorities established by the provincial government. There is need, as well, for provincial planning bodies in the social, economic and educational spheres to carry out planning relative to overall provincial plans. Finally, there is a need for regional and local planning in the social, economic and educational spheres.

The kinds of planning activities carried on in the central planning body, the provincial planning bodies, the regional and local

bodies would, of course, vary. So would the amount of research and development undertaken and the amount of public participation in the planning process.

At the local planning level it would be desirable to have wide-scale involvement of those affected by the plans generated. Since schools are institutions which serve the total community and involve each individual at some stage in his or her life; it is expected that participation in local educational planning should be broadly based and extensive. The organizational modes through which the local planning process can be effected will undoubtedly vary. In fact, it is highly likely that this will be an area of considerable social invention. New means of involving large numbers of people in the planning process will, in all probability, be developed. In all cases, however, local educational planning bodies will need information on which to base their planning decisions and to determine whether these decisions articulate with those of other regional and provincial planning bodies. This small study illustrates one way in which a local school district can gather educational data on a particular topic that is of vital concern to all local school districts, i.e. determining the expectations of parents, educators and students on the tasks of secondary education. The district is now in a position to use these data--for study, for discussion and for planning within larger social, economic and educational contexts.